

# AGENDA PLANNING

TOP TEN TIPS  
FROM RON MILAM  
CONSULTING

**1. Plan ahead:** Develop your agenda before your actual meeting. Agendas will likely include elements of the following:

- Orientation, Introductions and Agenda Overview
- Information Sharing and Updates
- Decision-making (includes time for brainstorming, categorizing and prioritizing – ideally the majority of the meeting goes towards this)
- Breaks (at least every 1 ½ hours give your group a 15 minute break)
- Evaluation
- Next Steps

**2. Involve your leadership:** Have the organization's leadership (often the Executive Director and President) plan the agenda together and forward it to other members before the meeting for their input.

**3. Estimate time needed for each agenda item:** Doing this helps keep your group moving forward throughout the meeting. If you don't finish an item in the amount of time you allotted for it, the group can either allocate more time to talk about it or add it to the next meeting's agenda.

**4. Have meeting participants lead different items:** Make sure each agenda item has a particular person that can present it, and that he or she is prepared to do so.

**5. Use your time wisely:** Use your time together to make important group decisions. Recognize that the bigger and more complex the decision, the longer amount of time you will need to allocate to it. *Minimize time allocated to updates and reports by emailing out reports prior to the meeting.*

**6. Don't pack in too much:** Prioritize the most important decisions you need to make. On average, groups should be able to decide two to three bigger decisions along with several other smaller decisions in a two-hour period.

**7. Review:** Review the agenda before you start the meeting and make sure all are in agreement. This orients the group to everything you aim to accomplish during your meeting.

**8. Stick to the agenda:** Many temptations exist that can have the effect of taking the group off-topic. If a good idea comes up, but is outside of the agenda, add it to a list of future agenda topics.

**9. Plan for breaks:** Give yourself some time to stretch, socialize and rest during meetings. Oftentimes the informal chatting that occurs during breaks leads to helping the group make decisions when they come back together.

**10. Brainstorm future agenda items at the end of your meeting:** Use the end of the meeting to start listing potential agenda topics for your next meeting.

## TO-DO LIST

- Develop an agenda beforehand with the leaders of the group.
- Write the agenda before the meeting and post it where everyone can see it.
- Research different ice-breaking activities to build stronger groups.
- Bring the following items to the meeting: clock, markers, easel & poster board.
- Greet each person as they come into the meeting room.
- Research the group you are facilitating beforehand.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Treat everyone with respect and appreciation.
- Ask for feedback at the end of the meetings you facilitate.
- Practice!

Ron Milam has over 14 years of experience facilitating meetings and developing leadership for over 50 organizations.

[www.ronmilam.com](http://www.ronmilam.com)

(323) 793-0591